



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Officer Signs Prevention of Significant Deterioration Findings

BISMARCK, N.D. – North Dakota continues to comply with Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) requirements, according to a Findings and Determination document signed Sept. 7, 2005, by State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D. The findings conclude a multi-year process by the state of North Dakota and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that involved an assessment of scientific methodologies, actual air monitoring data and complex legal issues associated with PSD requirements. The assessment concludes that North Dakota's air quality resources are being protected.

The Findings and Determination resulted from review of comments and testimony provided at a public hearing held April 19, 2005. The process completes a modeling assessment that was required in a February 2004 Memorandum of Understanding between the EPA and the state of North Dakota. The state's modeling assessment included tests comparing predicted concentrations of pollutants to actual data collected at monitors in Class I areas such as Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

In 1977, the federal government established the Prevention of Significant Deterioration program to protect the air quality in the nation's most pristine areas (Class I areas). The Clean Air Act identified monitoring as a viable way to track changes in air quality; however, air monitors available at the time were inaccurate. As a result, states used predictive modeling to estimate the concentrations of pollutants in the air.

Since then, more precise air monitors have been developed. Monitors in the Class I areas of North Dakota indicate that the amount of air pollutants is so low it cannot be detected 90 percent of the time. Since 1999, North Dakota has questioned the use of models that do not accurately reflect actual monitoring data. The Memorandum of Understanding with the EPA supports North Dakota's proposal to use actual air quality data to evaluate the accuracy of models.

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A copy of the state health officers' Findings and Determination is available at www.health.state.nd.us/AQ/Notices.htm. For more information, contact Dave Glatt, section chief, Environmental Health Section, or Terry O'Clair, director, Division of Air Quality, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.5150.

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